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AN APPROACH TO A CURRICULUM OF
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR A
REFORM JEWISH COMMUNITY
IN THE MIDDLE WEST


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AN APPROACH TO A CURRICULUM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR A REFORM JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE MIDDLE WEST

SAMUEL H. MARKOWITZ

PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this study to discover the primary interests and vital concerns which exist in a Reform Jewish congregation in a small city in the Middle West. These meaningful interests are to be utilized for the purpose of constructing a curriculum of religious education for this congregation. This investigation is regarded as significant, because the congregation chosen is regarded as typical of many in this country. It is based upon and had its inception in the theory that education is the process by which human experience is interpreted, enriched, and redirected. Religious education begins with "persons as persons both in their individual and group life," and seeks to raise their experience to religious levels. A religious personality is the product of the "conscious, intelligent, and purposive reconstruction" of his life by the individual and the group in the light of the highest aims and objectives of their religious tradition. This philosophy of education underlies, and is responsible for, this investigation.

A Jewish group in a world that is predominantly Gentile is confronted with the problems of adjustment which every minority group must face. It is the task of religious education to interpret and control the adjustment process in the light of the highest ideals. It will appear in the course of this investigation that the most meaningful interests of the members of the congregation are largely those which directly or indirectly concern their relationships to Gentiles. Hence, the question with which this investigation must ultimately concern itself is: From the point of view of the minority, how can religion achieve its aim in this specific situation?

It was realized almost from the beginning that a complete curriculum within the limits of one investigation is impossible. The men and women involved are human beings, and, as such, have a wide variety of experiences. The attempt to formulate a curriculum based upon all these experiences is too extensive an undertaking. This investigation limits itself to those experiences which are the most meaningful to these individuals as Jews and to this group as a Jewish group. The attempt will be made to formulate a program which will serve as an approach and an introduction to a curriculum of religious education. This study will concern itself only with those areas with which religious education can make its most effective beginning.

Since it is a Jewish group which is being dealt with, the definition, interpretation, and redirection of experience must take place in the light of the highest Jewish ideals and purposes. It is as Jews that the members of this congregation seek to adjust themselves to their world. The achievement of wholesome and integrated personality is the ultimate objective of religious education. Such an objective can be realized only when all phases of life are considered. This study is called an approach, because it is intended to reveal only those areas which will serve as an avenue of entrance into the whole realm of human experience.

STATEMENT OF THE SCOPE OF THE INQUIRY AND THE METHODS EMPLOYED

The aim in the beginning was to accumulate all the information possible. The work was to be carried on without any preconceived bias. The objective of this research was to record the interests, attitudes, and activities of the Reform Jewish element in the city. The investigation was to be limited to the members of the U. V. congregation. Some of these have a very close and others have a rather loose connection with the Synagog. But originally, it was intended to investigate the life of each of the 156 members. As the investigation proceeded, however, it became apparent that there were many who, though they are members of the congregation and attend the services two or three or even half a dozen times a year, are not attached to what shall be known in this study as the U. V.

Community. Outside the few visits to the synagog, they rarely, if ever, come into any contact with any of the other members of the congregation.

It was recognized in the beginning that this community consisted of groups or cliques of people. The community could be conceived as a collection of intersecting circles; one or two on the periphery of the group having only a vague connection with the other circles. Perhaps the only relation between these far distant circles and those which are huddled around the center and which are intersected there by many is the fact that the names of all are contained on the membership list, and all feel some sort of inclination to attend the services on the High Holy days.

But there are some members of the congregation who are not in any one of the circles in this group. They live and move and have their being in an altogether different sphere. Fondness for the rabbi or a sense of gratitude for kindness which some officer or active member of the congregation had displayed toward them, impelled them to join. Their children may be instructed in the Sunday School and even receive week-day instruction in Hebrew; they may attend the holiday services and even come a few times during the year. But their lives are lived in some other group or groups which are altogether outside of and may even be somewhat hostile to the Reform Jewish community. The investigation limits itself entirely to those who are part of the circles which constitute this community.¹

A sharp distinction is here drawn between the U. V. congregation and the U. V. community. The former is an institution; the latter is a group. Membership in the congregation is open to all. Any Jew is eligible. There is no credal requirement and no ceremony of admission. An individual applies for membership and the Board of Trustees at its monthly meeting fixes the amount of his dues in accordance with his ability to pay. The secretary notifies him of his acceptance into membership and encloses his first quarterly statement. Membership in the community, however, is dependent upon the successful correlation of the individual with

¹ The justification for the use of the term can be found in Park and Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1921, page 163.

one of the groups of which the community is composed. Membership in the congregation is formal; it is contingent upon no personal attachment of any kind. A man may belong to the congregation and have a speaking acquaintance with only a few of the members and intimate contact with none. Membership in the community is informal and depends upon the ability of the member to incorporate himself into the life of a group in the community.

The 63 members selected and established as the personnel of the U. V. community represent 115 adults;² and it is to these 115 individuals that this study limits itself almost entirely. The 55 children whose parents are in the community were used only as indicating general conditions in the relationships between Jews and Gentiles. The reason for this exclusion lies in the nature of the life that the children lead. Though they attend the Jewish Sunday School and in some cases find intimate companionship exclusively among other Jewish children, yet their interests are dominated very largely by their public school. This condition prevails especially in the grades from the seventh through high school, increasing in momentum in proportion to the nearness of the graduation year.³

The U. V. community is composed of 55 men, 60 women, and 55 children. The investigation concerns itself entirely with the interests, needs, activities, vital issues, and meaningful problems of the 115 adults.

The first attempt to obtain information was made by means of a questionnaire which dealt with the following: Sex, birthplace of the individual and of his parents, religious and secular education, occupation, membership in lodges and similar organizations, recreational, intellectual, religious and aesthetic interests, and the quality of his attachment to the Synagog.

The next method employed was the diary. Eight women were asked to record in detail what happened during a specified week. The women were chosen on the basis of their membership in the different cliques. It was intended to get as large a variety as

² For criteria by means of which the selection was made see original thesis in University of Chicago Library.

³ For facts upon which this conclusion is based see *ibid.*

possible. A wealth of material was thus obtained, but it was not very helpful. In some cases, it was plainly evident that the women were recording with the express purpose of making an impression; in spite of the fact that they had been asked to be perfectly honest and record nothing at all rather than any inaccuracies. In other cases, it was apparent that a deliberate attempt had been made to record precisely what happened and nothing else. But since the individual had no idea what was being sought, she recorded much that was useless and omitted much that would have been very useful.

The committee method proved more successful. Two men and one woman were entrusted with the knowledge that the investigator was engaged in writing a thesis; that the investigation was intended to serve as the basis for a program of communal Jewish education, and, if successful, would make a decided contribution to our knowledge of Jewish life and to the science of Jewish pedagogy. The membership list of the congregation was very carefully gone over. As a result of the deliberations of the committee, the distinction between the congregation and the community was evolved. Later, two others, one man and one woman, were added to the committee which finally consisted of:

- 2 married women.
- 1 retired business man.
- 1 merchant.
- 1 investment broker.

The great difficulty which appeared constantly was the tendency on the part of the members of the committee to seek for the bizarre and the unusual in the life of the community. Though their attention was called again and again to the fact that this investigation was concerned with normal relationships, yet invariably they would overlook important factors because of their evident concern with the unusual and abnormal.

The direct method of approaching people and obtaining from their own lips the information desired as far as they were able to provide it, was then decided upon. An instrument, adapted for local use from the interest analysis instrument evolved by the Department of Religious Education of the University of Chicago

Divinity School, was then prepared. This document was revised constantly during the investigation. Questions which produced no appreciable results were eliminated, and others which the exigency of the occasion seemed to demand were added. It is given below in the form which it ultimately assumed, although even now no claim is made for its finality or universality. Of the 55 men interviewed, 37 were visited by appointment at their places of business; 4, at the synagog, and 14, at home. Each interview was prefaced by the statement that the rabbi was working on his thesis at the University of Chicago and needed their help. He was trying to present an accurate and authoritative picture of the life of the community. It was made clear that this was an impersonal investigation; that the investigator was not interested in individuals as such but in the community as a whole; and that no individual would be singled out either as a horrible example or as a shining model, no matter what his answers to the questions might be. Furthermore, it was made clear that the question was not whether the answers were right or wrong, good or bad, but only whether they were true or false. It was not a "critical" analysis that was desired but, as far as possible, a careful diagnosis of the intellectual, religious, esthetic, economic, recreational, and all the other interests of every individual. Absolute frankness on the part of each one was enjoined as the prerequisite for the success of the investigation, the significance of which was duly emphasized. The point was stressed at some length, that this investigation was intended to serve as the basis for a program of communal Jewish education, and that its successful culmination would be of inestimable value to those teachers in American Israel who are training young men to fill pulpits in communities like ours. Hence, it was decidedly important that these questions be treated with the utmost care, each answer to be the result of at least some reflection.

"Rest assured that every bit of information is entirely anonymous. I myself will be unable to tell how you have answered the questions. Furthermore, while you will help materially by your willingness to answer every question, you are at perfect liberty to refuse to answer any question that might be put to you. Please make sure that you give me the truth or nothing at all." With a

statement of this kind, the prefatory remarks were brought to a close.

I. *General.*

1. Place of birth.
2. Date of birth.
3. Are your parents living? Give date of death of either parent.
4. How much schooling did you get?
5. What is the extent of your religious education?
6. What year were you married?
7. Give a brief life history.

II. *Recreation.*

1. Do you have a victrola? What records do you enjoy most?
2. Do you have a radio? What programs do you enjoy most?
3. How often do you go to the legitimate theater?
4. What plays do you prefer?
5. How often do you go to the picture show?
6. What shows do you prefer?
7. Mention the shows which you enjoyed most during the past year.
8. What games do you like best?
9. Have you a hobby?
10. How often do you get a vacation?
11. What do you do on vacation?

III. *Intellectual.*

1. What books do you read?
2. Which do you enjoy most?
3. How many do you read a month?
4. Mention the book that impressed you most in the last year or two.
5. What magazines do you read? Regularly? Occasionally?
6. Do you attend lectures? Which? How often?

IV. *Esthetic.*

1. Do you like music? What concerts do you attend?
2. What kind of music generally do you enjoy?
3. Do you like poetry?
4. How often do you read poetry?

V. *Religious.*

1. Do you engage in personal prayer?

2. Why do you attend services at the temple?
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
3. What are the reasons for your absence from temple?
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
4. How would you define religion?
5. What is your conception of God?
6. What do you think of immortality?
7. Did you have any of the following observances in the home of your parents:
 - (1) Friday evening home service.
 - (2) Sedar at Pesach.
 - (3) Hanukkah lights.
 - (4) Any other practices, i.e., dietary laws in any form?
8. Have you had any of these ceremonials in your own home?

VI. *Economic.*

1. How much are you worth?
2. What is your average income?
3. How much does it cost you to live?
4. How much do you save a year?
5. How much insurance do you carry?
6. Is premium included in living expenses?
7. Do you own your home?
8. How much rent do you pay?

VII. *Philanthropic.*

1. How much do you give a year to organized charity?
2. How much do you give to individuals?

VIII. *Social.*

1. Do you belong to the Country Club?
2. Do you go out often?
3. Do you feel at home there?
4. How many of your friends are Jews? By friends are meant those whose homes you visit and who visit your home at least once a month.
5. How many are non-Jews?
6. What do you do when together?
7. Do you play cards? How often? With whom?

IX. *Civic.*

1. Do you participate in communal projects?
2. Are you a member of a civic club?
3. Are you active in it?
4. Do you vote regularly?
5. What are your political affiliations? Why?

X. *Personal.*

1. What ambitions which you cherished when you were 17, 18, or 19 have you not attained?
2. What desires which you evolved in more recent years still remain unrealized?
3. What are the principal problems that confront you?
4. List in the order of their importance your chief interests.

XI. *Jewish-non-Jewish Relationships.*

1. Do you think all non-Jews are prejudiced against Jews?
2. What in your opinion is the reason for the existence of prejudice?
3. Have you had unpleasant experiences with Gentiles on account of their anti-Jewishness?
4. If not, how do you know that it exists?
5. How would you proceed to eliminate prejudice?

XII. *Israel's Future.*

1. What do you think is the future of the Jewish people in America?
2. Are you a Zionist? What kind?

The interview was anywhere from 45 minutes to two hours in length. In quite a few cases, a second and even a third interview became necessary on account of revisions in the instrument. The women were not asked the questions in Group VI, and of the men, 5 refused to answer and 2 said they could not. In most cases, the fluctuations in the market made it impossible. The explanatory remark, "How much cash could you get immediately for all that you own," was necessary. Two men and one woman refused to answer the questions in Group VII. Otherwise the instrument proved effective throughout.⁴

Most of the information in the section entitled *General Information*⁵ was obtained by direct questioning. The facts were verified,

⁴ For definition of questions see original thesis in University of Chicago Library.

⁵ See classification below.

as far as that was possible, by the Committee, and found to be essentially as stated. The information contained under the heading, *Group Alignments within the Community*,⁶ was obtained in part from the committee and in part by direct questioning, but mostly from direct observation. After having lived in the community for five years, the investigator became rather intimately acquainted with most of the members whose interest in the congregation entitled them to a place in the community. He visited their homes several times a year, and he was present in an official or unofficial capacity on all occasions of joy or sorrow. A tenth or twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, the seventy-fifth or eightieth birthday of a parent, or a "party" occasioned simply by the "indebtedness" of an individual to many others in the community, brought several groups together several times a year. It is on these occasions that the group alignments became quite obvious. The investigator's conclusions were thoroughly gone over by the committee and revised according to the judgment of its members. The material in the section entitled *The Relation of the Community to the Gentile World*⁷ was obtained in part from the answers to the questions in Groups VIII and XI, but mostly from observation and careful analysis. The periodic functions at the temple at which representatives from all the groups met at dinner and spent the evening together, and the attitudes revealed by chance remarks enabled the investigator, by observing and listening carefully, to formulate some definite conclusions. On account of the nature of the material, these conclusions were not submitted to the committee.

The techniques employed in this investigation can, therefore, be listed and designated as follows:

1. Questionnaireleast successful.
2. Diarysomewhat more successful.
3. Committeemuch more successful.
4. Personal interviewvery successful.
5. Observationmost successful.

The material collected was classified under the following headings:

⁶ See note 4.

⁷ See note 5.

1. General Information.
2. Group Alignments within the Community.
3. The Relation of the Community to the Gentile World.
4. The Jewish Religion.

GENERAL INFORMATION

It was found that:

1. The U. V. community consists largely of young and middle-aged men and women, most of whom are married, prosperous, and comfortable. The community is not greatly disturbed by economic changes. It enjoys a feeling of permanence. It is a well-established community, and is not affected by the removal of members from, nor by the arrival of prospective members in, the city.
2. Recreation occupies a place of more than average importance in the life of the community. Vacations are common. Comparison with a group of similarly situated non-Jews in the city would probably show that the members of the U. V. community visit the legitimate theater with much greater frequency. A majority of both men and women go to the movies or talkies almost as a matter of habit. Basketball games are attended regularly by many; golf is very common; card games are almost institutions in the community, and almost every individual has access to a radio. The community enjoys a variety of recreational opportunities.
3. Its esthetic interests and activities are few.
4. It is not an educated community in the formal sense. Neither can its intellectual interests be regarded as profound or extensive.
5. Charity claims little of the time of the members of the community, but receives a rather generous cash response.
6. The civic interests of the community are, comparatively speaking, limited.

To begin with these interests and raise them to religious levels, or to create other interests to displace or supplement these, is the function of religious education. But since this study is limited in purpose to those interest areas which are most meaningful, further

investigation becomes necessary. The objective is a program which will introduce and serve as an entrance into the whole range of human experience. Therefore, only those interests are selected which are of immediate concern to the U. V. community. Practically all the findings in this section point to those experiences which this group has in common with other human beings in the city. While of great importance for religious education and capable of yielding fruitful results, they cannot be designated as areas peculiar to the U. V. community. It is the purpose of this study to discover those areas in which lie the vital problems and issues of the group.

At the same time, the facts presented in this chapter portray a rather striking and significant picture. It is the picture of a community with all the equipment for participation in the city's life, and yet sharing to a very limited degree in civic projects and programs. The men and women in the U. V. community are American in speech and dress, and in most of their habits, manners, and attitudes. In general, they would probably exhibit more than average initiative and ability as compared with non-Jewish residents in the city. What is the reason for this apparent isolation? Does the cause lie outside or inside the Jewish group? Does the responsibility for this isolation rest with the Jews or with the Gentiles? The section on Gentile-Jewish relationships will throw considerable light on these questions.

But others of equal pertinence force themselves forward. Why does play loom so large on the group horizon? Why does recreation have so conspicuous a place in the life of the group? And why are esthetic and intellectual values given so little attention? There is some evidence to indicate that the community would rate slightly higher in intelligence than any other similarly delimited group. Why, then, is there so little time for and so little interest in intellectual pursuits? While it is true that the community on the whole is far from being a university community, yet there is a high degree of probability that it possesses more than average capacity to appreciate intellectual and esthetic advantages. There is wealth in the community, as has been indicated. It is not for economic reasons that poetry, painting, music, and all the other fine arts

receive so little time and attention. What is the cause for the prevalence of recreation and the absence of the intellectual and the esthetic?

Charity claims little of the time of the members of the community. Very few volunteer their services in any philanthropic endeavor. To call on the sick is not a community practice, except in the case of relatives or the members of one's own group. And it is not because the community is uncharitable. The large contributions are evidence to the contrary. "The Jews take care of their own," and "The Jews are liberal givers," are statements heard frequently, especially at the time of a city-wide drive for funds. Yet very little of the time of the community is given to charity. The members of the community enjoy considerable leisure which is devoted to neither philanthropic nor intellectual nor esthetic activities. It is spent mainly, almost exclusively, upon recreation. What is the reason for this specialization, this concentration upon one phase of human existence at the expense of so many others?

The reputation for generosity which Jews enjoy may in itself be a significant symbol. It may be in the hope, conscious or otherwise, of making an impression that they respond so liberally. This same motive may operate in the desire "to care for their own." On the other hand, a zeal for group preservation might contribute to or be entirely responsible for Jewish provision for dependents. A possible explanation for both the absorption in recreational activities and the exceptionally generous response to appeals for charity is the absence of a dominant objective in life, a purpose or cause which would elicit the highest enthusiasm and the whole-hearted devotion of the men and women in the community. The issues here raised will be carried forward and given fuller treatment in succeeding sections. This section is intended simply as a general survey of life in the U. V. community.

GROUP ALIGNMENTS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Within the U. V. community, there is only too clearly evident the process of isolation and segregation on a large scale. The social leaders are for the most part those women who have married into, or belong by birth to, the old established families. They

have their parties and entertainments—in the afternoon without, and in the evening with, their husbands.

These ten or twelve women constitute an informal and in some respects a primary organization which is generally accepted as the socially elite group of the community. This group serves as the model whose example the others in the city, both as individuals and in groups, consciously or otherwise seek to emulate. To become a part of the select group seems to be the secret desire of most of the members in the community. Occasionally, one of them succeeds, but only after long and persistent effort.

The entire community is divided into more or less homogeneous entities which, without formal organization, are, nevertheless, definitely established. The members of each group are loyal and participate in the democratically prescribed activities with unflinching regularity. They are careful whom they receive into their group, but entertain a secret, perhaps subconscious, willingness to be received into the group above. Throughout the community life, this process of isolation and segregation goes on. The members of the superior group are careful to retain the prestige which that group enjoys. To do so, it is necessary to set up barriers, intangible and even unconscious, but none the less real, against those of the inferior group. The latter can control the individual in its membership only until the superior group opens its doors and receives her into its midst.

It is evident that the desire for recognition is a most meaningful interest of the men and women of the U. V. community. It should, therefore, be listed among those areas of experience with which to begin a program of religious education. It is clear from the facts presented in this section that inclusion in a more select and desirable circle is a dominant community interest. In the lower groups, this eagerness for social status is unmistakably evident. And in the upper groups, there seems to be an equally fervent though perhaps less evident and even unconscious desire to maintain existing alignments.

Over and over again, Jews will declare, "We are Jews in religion; we are American in every other respect." Yet unlike other Americans, as far as the facts could be ascertained, Jews seek compan-

ionship and find their relationships of a primary character almost exclusively in the personnel of their own group. What is the reason for this limitation?

Is this condition indicative of an introversion? Is the desire for recognition so potent because of the inability on the part of the men and women in the community to acquire status in the outside world? Does the attitude of Gentiles compel the Jew to establish his social relationships in his own group and nowhere else? These questions will receive fuller treatment in the next section. They are here stated as issues emerging from a study of group alignments within the community.

Recognition and status in the community are very intimately associated with the whole problem of recreation. The leisure which the economic circumstances of the community make possible is devoted largely to play. The group life is organized around recreation. Though ostensibly a religious body, existing in order to perpetuate a religious tradition and preserve certain religious ideals, the instrumentalities of religion do not constitute the materials of the communal life. Instead, cards, mah jong, parties, and recreational functions of various kinds form the structure of the community's existence.

Why is recreation of such overwhelming importance? Why does play absorb such a disproportionate share of community effort? It is not because the membership is inferior mentally and incapable of or even indisposed toward effort of any other kind. Is the predominance of play likewise due to an introversion? Is it the result of Gentile antipathy to Jewish associations? Is play, then, a compensation for frustrated desires, an outlet for unspent Jewish energy? Or is it, as intimated above, purely and simply the result of undirected and uncontrolled excessive leisure? Men and women have been released from economic pressure. Wealth has provided servants at home and additional employees in store and factory. The members of the community, especially the women, have been freed from other duties and have failed to organize their leisure time to any other end. Thus recreation became institutionalized and is today a potent factor in the life of the community. The issues here raised are vital and deserve careful consideration in any

attempt to formulate a program of religious education for the community.

The economic question is closely allied with the desire for recognition. In some cases, it is their economic standing which keeps certain families out of the different groups. No family in the community is in any immediate or even remote danger of poverty. But the desire to obtain or retain a place in the group is frequently responsible for an over-emphasis upon wealth as an essential in life and an indispensable prerequisite to happiness. There have been losses on the stock market, and in a few cases family fortunes have been cut in half; yet no household is or will be deprived of the necessities and even some of the luxuries of life. But the upper groups set a pace at which it becomes difficult for some of the families in some of the other groups to follow. As a result, the economic element is stressed unduly, and money looms large as an objective in life.

Is the ostentation which wealth makes possible likewise a compensation for some unrealized desire? Is the display which characterizes the upper groups, and which the lower groups seek to emulate, the natural result of unattained ambitions in the Gentile world? Might not the high economic standing of the community as a whole point to a concentration on wealth as a substitute for the failure to achieve recognition in the outside world? Is it not possible that money is the reward which the community subconsciously seeks to pay itself for the disappointment in connection with non-Jewish favor?

Three dominant interests emerge from this study of Group Alignments within the Community—Desire for Recognition, Recreation, and the Economic Problem. Issues which proceed from these interest areas follow:—

I. *Recognition within the Community.*

- A. Why is one group more and another group less desirable?
- B. Is it possible or even desirable to return to the Standard Club days? ¹

¹ The Standard Club was originally, when the community was much smaller, the sole recreational agency. It was associated intimately with the

- C. What effect has the process of exclusion and inclusion upon communal life? Upon the excluded? Upon the included?
- D. Is there any relation between the desire for status within the community and the desire for status in the world without?

II. *Recreation.*

- A. What is the function of recreation?
- B. As now engaged in, is that purpose achieved or defeated?
- C. Should there be such a close relation between recreation and social status?
- D. Is there any connection between the recreational activities within the community and the attitude of the Gentile world?

III. *Economic.*

- A. How much should a family spend each year?
- B. Should status in the community depend upon a family's economic ability?
- C. Why does the community enjoy such economic security?
- D. What is the relation between wealth in the community and the attitude of the Gentiles?

In these areas lie some of the most dominant interests of the U. V. community. Religious education would begin with these interests and deal with them according to the most ideal purposes. The vital issues in each area must be considered in relation to the specific situations in which they appear. Thus, for example, in the effort to answer the question, "Why is one group more and another group less desirable," religion would point to the age-old and universally accepted principle that we are all children of the same father, that a common humanity binds us together, and that these distinctions and barriers are, in the final analysis, comparatively superficial and perhaps even superimposed. It is the function of religious education to control each situation in accordance with the best teachings which the human race has thus far evolved.

congregation and made provision for all religio-festive observances. For a history of the Standard Club, see original thesis in University of Chicago library.

RELATION OF THE COMMUNITY TO THE GENTILE WORLD

The relation of the U. V. community to the Gentile world by which it is surrounded is complex and intricate. The Jews came to this country with the determination to make themselves part and parcel of the life of America. In the attainment of that end, there was naturally a withdrawal of interest from the life that can be denominated as peculiarly Jewish.

At the same time, the age-old desire for group persistence remains constant. Family control and hostility to intermarriage are informal agencies which have a very important place in group preservation. Sometimes they fail; for the most part, they have succeeded in saving the community from loss of identity. Prejudice against the Jew enters the situation and produces definite reactions and attitudes in the Jewish community. In spite of prejudice, there persists the desire for recognition by and status in the Gentile world.

There are many other phases of the Gentile-Jewish situation. The contacts of Jews and Gentiles in the commercial, philanthropic, and various other phases of the city life and their correlation with the recreational relationships of the two groups would doubtless furnish a wealth of material of great value for religious education. The same results could be expected of a study of those families which at one time associated with Gentiles but which now confine themselves to Jews; also those families which, though closely attached to the Jewish community, enjoy intimate association with Gentiles today. For it is in these individuals that we find the development of personality outside the group. This brief analysis is intended merely to show the importance of the Jewish-Gentile problem for the purpose of this study.

The contents of this section reveal a community which is intensely group conscious. Determined to maintain its own identity, it is no less eager to enjoy status in the Gentile world. This study would show that the community as a whole and the individuals constituting it in particular are possessed of an overwhelming desire to appear well in the eyes of the Gentiles. Men and women in the community are exceedingly anxious to convince the world at large that Jews are by no means the objectionable and undesirable

people that the world (in the opinion of these men and women) seems to think they are. The fear that the community as a whole or any individual in it might at any time and on any given occasion bring discredit upon all the Jews exists in a large measure and is frequently, sometimes blatantly, manifest. On the other hand, any distinction achieved by any member or members of the community or by the community as a whole is the occasion for congratulation and elation. Whether that distinction or achievement is in social standing or literary accomplishment or political recognition is of no consequence. Anything that will bring to any individual favorable publicity is regarded as highly desirable, because it is presumed to reflect creditably upon the whole community. And conversely, any achievement or accomplishment by the community as an entity or by any individual in the community is regarded with favor, because it is assumed that it will increase the respect of Gentiles for Jews in the entire city. Is such a limitation of interest desirable? Should their concern be for their own group exclusively? Should not Jews widen their horizon?

At the same time, there is the rigid insistence upon the maintenance of group distinctiveness. Much has been written on the virtue of Jewish persistence. The failure of the nations and peoples of the earth to blot out and make an end of the Jewish people has served as the basis for innumerable panegyrics. Why are the Jews today, as they have been in the past, so acutely conditioned against assimilation? Why, for example, does the tradition against intermarriage enjoy such remarkable virility? What is the relation between the desire for status in the Gentile world and intense group consciousness? Is it possible that the latter is the result of failure to achieve the former? Does the Jew find in devotion to his group a compensation for thwarted ambitions? Or is the process to be reversed? Is his failure to acquire status outside his group due to his unwillingness completely to merge with his environment? Is his intense group consciousness responsible for the unwillingness of the environment to adopt him and make him part of itself?

There are those who say that every Jew is afflicted with an inferiority complex. The characteristics displayed by the members of the community as revealed in this section lend considerable

credence to this view. Might it not be that this complex is due to the failure of the Jew to accept wholeheartedly and unconditionally one of two alternatives, either complete and unqualified assimilation, or rigid and uncompromising preservation?

Professor Park says: ¹ "There are no doubt periods of transition and crisis in the lives of most of us that are comparable with those which the immigrant experiences when he leaves home to seek his fortunes in a strange country. But in the case of the marginal man, the period of crisis is relatively permanent." Is it not possible that this permanency is due to the inner conflict in which the Jew in America is engaged? Eager to become a part of the new life, and at the same time unwilling to sever himself completely from the old, the Jew in America became a "cultural hybrid, a man living and sharing intimately in the cultural life and traditions of two distinct peoples."

This desire for participation in the civic and social life of the city may be a cause or an effect of the desire for recognition by the Gentiles. In any event, widely divergent views are held by members of the community on the question of the possibility and the desirability of social and civic participation by Jews. One member of the community says:

We Jews should be more interested in civic and communal problems than the non-Jews. We are in a better position to provide leadership in communal movements. Economically and in every other way, we are so situated that we ought to do much more than our numbers would warrant toward the solution of unemployment and similar problems.

In striking contrast is the following statement by a Jew as prominent in the community as is the author of the just quoted statement:

We were always told to mingle with the Gentiles and show that we Jews are human beings just like they are. This policy doubtless has its virtues, but it also has its shortcomings. For the more we mingle with Gentiles, the less do we associate with Jews. And the less we associate with Jews, the weaker does

¹ Robert Park, "Migration and the Marginal Man," in *Personality and the Social Group*, edited by Burgess, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1929, page 77.

the Jewish religion become. I have seen it happen in our community and in my own family. Jewish children, encouraged to mingle with Gentiles by their parents, have grown up and ultimately found themselves estranged from the Jewish community. We should mingle with Gentiles; but what to do in the dilemma is a question which a wiser man must answer.

It is evident that the matter is of genuine concern to the U. V. community. As citizens, such participation is desirable; as Jews, it may be impossible. As loyal adherents to their religious tradition, it may be undesirable; as citizens, it may be part of their duty. The forces which operate in this situation are complex. It seems impossible to isolate the motives involved. Two forces, however, seem to manifest about equal potency. The Jew seems eager to find a place in the Gentile sun and yet unwilling completely to sever allegiance to his past. As a result, his participation in the life of the city is subject to two antipodal forces. The one urges him on; the other holds him back.

Complicating the situation and influencing it in considerable measure is the attitude of the non-Jewish world. Prejudice which rises out of the conflict of the two cultures is a factor which does not lend itself readily to analysis. For it is usually an emotional reaction. However, it is evident that it exists and exerts a tremendous influence.

The Jewish group is convinced of and even obsessed by the fact of the existence of Gentile prejudice. One of the primary concerns of the men and women in this community is the unpleasant and undesirable attitude of their non-Jewish fellow citizens. A discussion-group meeting at the temple for the purpose of studying current events and "interpreting them according to the Jewish point of view" finds itself, after a few weeks, engaged with the subject of "Prejudice." And the meeting at which a short paper was read on this subject was participated in by more of the members than was the case at any other meeting during the year.

Is this conviction or obsession the natural defense erected as the result of a defeated ambition? Or is there existent in the Gentile attitude an antipathy to Jews? Is prejudice real? To what extent is it operative in the community? What is its cause? What is its cure?

If prejudice is real, if Gentiles are determined to exclude Jews from civic and social life, then is it not possible that the Jewish community, thrown back upon itself, finds compensation and comfort, first, in elaborating and multiplying the amount and intensity of prejudice; second, in a fierce loyalty to its own tradition; and third, in an equally fierce desire to elevate the standards of conduct within the group? At the same time, perhaps because it is a minority which is involved, Gentile favor remains a desideratum. Excluded and discriminated against, the Jew continues to hope that he and his group might win recognition. Would he separate himself from his group if his aim were achieved? There seems to be some evidence for this assumption. There seems to be some indication that the Jew is loyal to his group out of the fear of finding himself adrift.

It is apparent that the relationship to the Gentile world is the most meaningful interest of the U. V. community. *It is the point of the greatest tension in the life adjustment process.* In this Gentile-Jewish area lie the four most vital of the community problems—Recognition by the Gentiles, Group Preservation, Jewish Participation in Civic Life, and Prejudice. Some of the issues which emerge from these problem areas are here listed:

I. *Recognition by the Gentiles.*

- A. Why is the U. V. community so eager to enjoy Gentile favor?
- B. What would be the result if complete and unqualified recognition, either as individuals or as a group, were achieved?

II. *Group Preservation.*

- A. Why is the community so determined to retain its identity?
- B. Is the hostility to intermarriage justifiable?
- C. Could Jewish values be preserved even though the community were assimilated?
- D. Is it possible to lead a wholesome existence on the margin of two cultures?

III. *Jewish Participation in Civic Life.*

- A. Should Jews participate in civic activities?
- B. Shall such participation be limited or unlimited?
- C. What would be the results in either case?

IV. *Prejudice.*

- A. To what extent is it real and to what extent is it imaginary?
- B. How is prejudice to be recognized?
- C. What is the cause of prejudice?
- D. What shall be Jewish behavior in its presence?

Religious education would take these issues and raise them to religious levels. Their analysis and interpretation would take place in the light of the highest human ideals. Thus, for example, in seeking an answer to the question, "What shall be the Jewish attitude in the presence of prejudice?" religion would offer the example of nonresistance, of overcoming evil with good, of the behavior suggested by the words, "Not by might and not by power, but by My spirit, shall ye prevail, saith the Lord."

THE JEWISH RELIGION

From one point of view, it can hardly be said that the community has a religion. Practically everybody attends the services on the High Holy days and turns to the synagog in the presence of death. Otherwise, there is very little uniformity in the religion of the community. Prayer is a habit with less than half the men and less than three fourths of the women; and the worship content is highly diversified. Religious beliefs are as variegated as the colors of the rainbow, and ceremonials are given little attention in the homes of the community. To attend the Friday evening services cannot be called a community habit. Very few religious practices receive general attention in the community. And what is more, most of the fathers and mothers in the community have never had training in these observances. Pesach, Purim, Hanukkah, and similar institutions do not generate sentiments or revive memories in the minds of the adults. Any attempt to re-introduce some of the traditional Jewish practices into the group life is met with the ignorance, to say nothing of the indifference, of many of the men and women in the community. In other words, there is comparatively very little communal activity of a formal religious nature; recreation looms much larger on the communal horizon than does organized religion.

This departure from the traditional ways is doubtless the natural result of the earlier movement for incorporation in American life. Eager to become a part of the new country in which they found themselves, Jews discarded the "notions, customs, and observances of the ghetto." Thus a generation grew up in America which, while conscious of its attachment to the "house of Israel," is nevertheless unacquainted with the instrumentalities of the Jewish religion.

If the Jew is afflicted with an inferiority complex, then is it not possible that this affliction is due to his failure to win the recognition which he so ardently sought in his environment? In the past, he found in the Jewish community, in the observances and practices of his religion, the strength to endure his defeats and disappointments in the Gentile world.¹ Belief and ritual, traditions and institutions gave him a feeling of at-home-ness in the world. If the modern Jew is to enjoy this same feeling in the face of anti-Semitism, is it not possible that the re-establishment of Jewish religious life, the re-introduction and adaptation of religious observances and customs, is an indispensable prerequisite?

It might be said that the men and women in the U. V. community live on the "margin of two cultures and two societies." It is possible that the fear and the sensitiveness mentioned above are due, first, to the failure of the Jew to find himself at home in his environment, and, second, to his inability to find in his own culture and in the traditions of his own people that sense of security and that feeling of stability so essential to a wholesome existence.

This section reveals an infiltration of Protestant belief and practice into the prayer habits and theological conceptions of the community, probably a natural result of the desire for incorporation in American life. Yet the persistence of the control of Jewish tradition is unmistakable. The desire on the part of the individual to be among his own people in death, if not in life, is clearly evident. Is this desire another indication of the fear of finding himself neglected and adrift? Is the attitude of the Gentiles responsible for this reversion? Is the return to the Synagog and even to

¹ See Israel Abraham's, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1896.

active participation in the Synagog program as the result of a death due entirely to the realization, conscious or otherwise, that the Jew can find himself "at home" only among his own? It is highly probable that the hostility of the outside world has been at least as potent a factor in preserving Jewish tradition as has been Jewish tradition in preserving the identity of the Jewish group.

It is significant that prayer and religious ideas are by no means the vital forces that traditions concerning death and the departed appear to be. Frequent absence from the services is common; but failure to "have yahrzeit" on the anniversary of a departed one is rare. People who come to the services only once or twice a year will be present without fail several times after a death has occurred. And the desire for a burial according to Jewish tradition exists without exception throughout the community. Men and women may be unconcerned over their standing in the group while alive, but are vitally concerned over their place in death. It would seem that a Jew can sever himself from his people almost entirely—but not completely. In the presence of the final experience, he wants the assurance of a place among his own. This fact might point either to his unwillingness to make himself entirely of the warp and woof of non-Jewish life or to the refusal on the part of the non-Jewish world to adopt him completely as its own.

The problems which arise out of a consideration of the religious ideas and practices of the community are many. It seems probable, however, that they are all intimately related to the primary problem of the U. V. community—Gentile-Jewish relationships. Hence the issues which emerge from this section might be stated as follows:

- I. What changes if any, does the American environment make necessary in Jewish beliefs and practices?
- II. How can the Jewish religion be made to function most effectively in the life adjustment process?

Out of these major issues proceed the subsidiary issues:

- A. What is the value and the function of religious concepts?
- B. What is to be achieved by prayer, public and private? How can prayer be made to serve its

- highest purpose? What changes, if any, are to be made in the liturgy and in prayer habits, in order that they might serve the needs of the community most adequately?
- C. How shall the Friday evening service be utilized, in order that all its possibilities might be fully exploited for the benefit of the community?
 - D. What shall be done with home ceremonial?
 1. Friday evening Kiddush.
 2. Seder at Passover.
 3. Lights at Hanukkah.
 4. Purim and other festivals.
 - E. How should the experience of death affect the behavior of the members of the community with reference to
 1. Yahrzeit.
 2. Burial customs.
 3. Attendance at services.

The issues here raised will be given further elaboration and consideration in the next section. It is sufficient to say here that religion would raise them to the highest levels and give them interpretation and meaning according to the finest which the human race has thus far developed. In dealing with prayer, for example, religion, having found a dynamic, a motivating objective for the life of the community, would thereby infuse into ritual and ceremonial a new meaning. Prayer would become "the dramatic rehearsal" of the community's highest ideals.

AN APPROACH TO A CURRICULUM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A. The Vital Issues

Throughout this investigation, two questions have been kept constantly in mind. The first is, What are the interest areas in this community in which religious education can function most effectively? And the second is, What are the problems peculiar to these individuals as Jews and to this community as a Jewish community? There are many experiences which the men and women involved have in common with their non-Jewish fellow citizens. This study has revealed problems which would undoubtedly be included in a city-wide curriculum of religious education, but which cannot be

listed among those intended for use by the Jewish educator. It is true that any delimitation of this kind is bound to be somewhat artificial, since the Jews live in and are part and parcel of the life of the city. But this study was undertaken in the hope of constructing an approach to a curriculum of education for this community and is, therefore, concerned primarily with those specialized problems peculiar to this entity in the life of the city. In the adjustment process, every group confronts problems which are exclusively its own. And it is these problems with which the program of religious education should begin.

As has been indicated, it is in the Gentile-Jewish area in which lie many of the dominant interests of the community. Even in those realms of experience which are designated as exclusively Jewish, the influence of the Gentile world seems to be potently felt. The ten areas here listed as the most meaningful in the life of the community appear in the order of what seems to be their importance to the community. Intellectual and esthetic needs cannot be classified as dominant interests, yet they assume importance and deserve a place in this outline because of their obviously intimate relation to other dominant interests.

I. *Recognition by the Gentiles.*

- A. Why are Jews afraid of incurring the ill-will of Gentiles?
- B. Why are Jews always so eager to please the Gentiles?
- C. Should Jews feel flattered by Gentile attention?
- D. What would be the result if complete and unqualified recognition either as individuals or as a group were achieved?

II. *Group Preservation.*

- A. Why should the U. V. community preserve its identity?
- B. Is intermarriage desirable? Is it undesirable? Why?
- C. Is assimilation desirable? Is it undesirable? Why?
- D. Is it possible to be a good Jew and a good American at the same time? How?

III. *Jewish Participation in the Life of the City.*

- A. Should Jews seek admittance to the Country Club? To exclusive societies?

- B. Should Jews enter politics?
- C. Should more or fewer Jews belong to luncheon clubs?
- D. Should Jews participate in the recreational activities of Gentiles? As individuals? In small groups?
- E. What would be the result of unlimited participation?

IV. *Prejudice.*

- A. How much of it is actual? How much of it is due to Jewish super-sensitiveness?
- B. How is prejudice to be recognized?
- C. What is the cause of prejudice?
- D. To what extent are Jews responsible for its existence?
 - 1. Because of the aggressiveness of many Jews?
 - 2. Because of loud, noisy, vulgar Jews?
 - 3. Because many Jews are prejudiced against Gentiles?
- E. What shall be Jewish behavior in its presence?
 - 1. When a Jew is excluded from the Country Club?
 - 2. When praise and reward justly due are obviously withheld?
 - 3. When aspersions are cast upon his people?
- F. Is prejudice a normal human reaction?
- G. Should the Jew always expect it?

V. *Recognition Within the Jewish Community.*

- A. Why is one group more and another group less desirable?
- B. Are groups necessary?
- C. Would it not be possible for the community to form one group?
- D. What effect has the process of exclusion and inclusion upon the life of the community? Upon the excluded? Upon the included?
- E. Is there any relation between status within the community and the desire for status in the world without?
- F. If Jews would find companionships among Gentiles, what results would follow?

VI. *Recreation.*

- A. What is the function of recreation?

- B. As now engaged in, is that purpose achieved or defeated?
- C. How much time and money should an individual and a family allow for recreation?
- D. What kind or kinds of recreation are most wholesome and beneficial? What kinds are unwholesome and undesirable?
- E. Should there be such a close relation between recreation and social status?
- F. What is the relation between the recreational activities within the community and the attitude of Gentiles?

VII. *Economic.*

- A. How much should a normal family spend each year?
- B. Do the families in the community spend more than they should?
- C. Is there a relation between status in the community and wealth?
- D. Is such a relation desirable or undesirable?
- E. Why are the families in the community for the most part so economically secure?
- F. Is there a relation between wealth in the community and prejudice?
- G. Is it possible that prejudice, by making the Jew feel insecure, impels him to become wealthy or at least economically well established.

VIII. *The Jewish Religion.*

- A. If it is established that the U. V. community should continue to preserve its identity, the following issues are raised:
 - 1. What changes, if any, does the American environment make necessary in Jewish beliefs and practices?
 - a. Shall the Synagog ritual contain more or less Hebrew?
 - b. Shall Hebrew be taught in the Sunday School?
 - c. What revisions are necessary in home ceremonials?
 - d. Is home observance essential?
 - e. Is not the Temple observance sufficient?

- f. Should an American Jewish home be different in any respect from a non-Jewish home?
 - g. Is it proper for a Jewish home to have a Christmas tree? An Easter hunt?
 - h. What shall Jewish children of pre-Sunday School age be taught at home?
2. How can the Jewish religion serve the U. V. community most satisfactorily?
- a. Religious Concepts.
 - (1) The God idea.
 - (a) What is its value?
 - (b) What can a modern man believe about God?
 - (2) Immortality.
 - (a) What is its value?
 - (b) What can a modern man believe about immortality?
 - b. Temple Services.
 - (1) What is their value?
 - (2) How can they be made more useful?
 - c. Private Devotion.
 - (1) What is its value?
 - (2) How shall it be engaged in?
 - d. Home Ceremonials.
 - (1) Are they necessary? Desirable?
 - (2) In what form have they value? What changes are necessary, if any?
 - e. How should the experience of death affect the behavior of the community with reference to:
 - (1) Yahrzeit.
 - (2) Burial customs.
 - (3) Attendance at services.
- B. If it is decided that assimilation is desirable, that the U. V. community should lose its identity as rapidly as possible, then the deliberate and purposeful attempt to eliminate those elements of Jewish distinctiveness, some of which, though disregarded in considerable measure, still exist

with some degree of potency in the community, would be undertaken. The following issues would then emerge:

1. What values, if any, are there in the Jewish religion which can and should be conserved?
 2. What religion, if any, shall Jews accept?
 3. How can the traditions and beliefs of Judaism be most readily destroyed?
- C. If it is decided that the question of Jewish preservation must be held in abeyance, that it cannot be answered, then the following issues would arise:
1. How "Jewish" should a modern Jew be?
 2. To what extent shall he attach himself to non-Jewish life, and to what degree shall he preserve his Jewish identity?
 3. How shall the Jewish religion with its beliefs, its ceremonials, and its institutions be adjusted and adapted, revised and re-organized, to serve the purpose?

IX. *Intellectual Interests.*

- A. Could not the community more profitably spend some of the time now devoted to recreation?
- B. Are intellectual activities given their proper place in the life of the community?
- C. How could a literary program for the community be organized? On the basis of existing groups or in the community at large?
- D. What kind of program would be most desirable?
- E. What is the Jewish tradition in connection with learning?

X. *Esthetic Interests.*

- A. Do poetry, painting, music, and other spiritual values receive the attention they deserve from the community?
- B. Why does not the community take advantage of the esthetic opportunities which it can so abundantly afford?
- C. Is the community utilizing or squandering its privileges?
- D. Is there any relation between prejudice and the apparent dearth of esthetic interests in the community?

- E. What should the community do in the matter?
- F. How can esthetic tastes and interests be developed?

As stated in the beginning, this program is an approach to a curriculum of religious education for the U. V. Community. It serves as an entrance into the entire range of human experience upon which a curriculum is based. The ten areas listed above are those in which lie the most meaningful experiences and the most vital interests of the U. V. community. The issues extracted from these areas are to be regarded as suggestive. There are innumerable subsidiary issues which would emerge naturally and which would prove to be as vital and meaningful as the major issues. Any attempt to formulate a curriculum for the U. V. community must begin with these interests.

This study has shown that the Gentile-Jewish relationship is fundamental in any consideration of the U. V. community. Therefore, the more significant issues are those which proceed from this experience area. Likewise, even those areas which are denominated as specifically Jewish are conditioned by the Gentile world. The problems which arise out of this situation constitute the most effective approach to a curriculum of religious education for the U. V. community.

B. How Religion Can Function

It is in the tension experiences in which religion has always achieved its richest and greatest results. The history of Israel reveals the noblest ideals emanating from those times when Israel was confronted with the gravest problems. Caught between two cultures, torn between two loyalties, the U. V. community is confronted with a situation which is both complex and critical. The question, "How can religion function in the situation?" is most pertinent.

In the present state of the psychology and philosophy of religion, it is difficult, if not impossible, to present a satisfactory definition of religion. Whether Judaism is a religious or a national concept is a question over which rabbis have found themselves hopelessly divided. On the one hand, Solomon Goldman says: "Israel has

lived for Israel's sake and for Israel's sake alone. Our people never suffered nor fought for a God idea . . . Israel is unique and distinctive because she developed more than any other nation in the world a zeal for the maintenance and perpetuation of her *ego* . . . Israel sought to build a nation, to establish a cultural homogeneity by means of festivals, folkways, language."¹ On the other hand, Kaufmann Kohler says: "Judaism . . . does not denote the Jewish nationality with its political and cultural achievements and aspirations . . . Judaism is nothing less than a message concerning the One and holy God and one, undivided humanity with a world-uniting Messianic goal, a message intrusted by divine revelation to the Jewish people . . . The name Judaism alone expresses the preservation of the religious heritage of Israel . . ."²

From one point of view, Jews constitute a religious group and are different from their non-Jewish neighbors only in creed and theology. From the other point of view, Jews constitute a cultural group and differ from their non-Jewish neighbors in group habits, traditions, and institutions. And between these two positions are many gradations of opinion on the question.

Yet, a working concept is necessary if any valid attempt is made to formulate a program of education for this community. It might be said that religious education seeks to interpret and assume an attitude toward human experiences in the light of ultimate and eternal values. Therefore, the question which the U. V. community situation raises is: In the light of the best and finest which man has thus far evolved, how shall the community interpret and deal with its experiences?

Inasmuch as the Gentile-Jewish problem is the basic consideration in the life of the community, religion must begin with this problem and discover the most ideal solution. The U. V. community finds itself on the margin between two antipodal cultures; the life of the ghetto on the one hand, and the life of a small city in the Middle West on the other. Religion might fix the attention

¹ See article, Solomon Goldman, "The God Idea in Judaism," *New Palestine*, May 15, 1929.

² Kaufmann Kohler, *Jewish Theology*, New York, Macmillan Company, 1918, pages 8 and 16.

of the community upon the problem in the solution of which there seem to be three possibilities:

1. Complete assimilation which does not seem to be either possible or desirable.
2. A continuation of the haphazard process of adjustment which has characterized the community in the past and which is likewise undesirable and unsatisfactory, as this study has shown.
3. A definitely planned program of adjustment which will find in the situation opportunity for creative religious experience. Thus, for example, in dealing with the problem of prejudice, assuming that its existence has been established, the community will ask itself, "How shall we react to the situation in accordance with the finest teachings of the race?" And the answer would probably be, "Neither in bitterness nor in retaliation nor in isolation do we find the goal of religious endeavor; only by the discovery of our common interests as members of the human family and citizens of the same city can we make prejudice and all other hindrances to social welfare and happiness fade out of existence. For it is a problem which is neither exclusively Jewish nor Gentile. It should be the concern of all who have the welfare of the civic life at heart. And when we have learned to conduct ourselves without rancor or hatred or prejudice on our part, but with genuine poise and calmness and in the true spirit of brotherliness and love, then will we be able to bring our non-Jewish fellow citizens to a realization of the seriousness and a consideration of all the intricacies of the problem. Then together will we find the solution in the light of the best Christian and Jewish teaching."

Religion, in other words, would raise the problem to a more universal level, to the plane where it is viewed not from the narrow, limited, and sectarian point of view, but from the point of view of abiding and eternal values.

It is possible, also, that religion would find a remedy for the Gentile-Jewish situation by providing a dominant and worthwhile objective in the life of the U. V. community. If the Jews of the city were engaged in the pursuit of some lofty ideal which would command their highest energies and elicit their warmest enthusiasms, the Gentile-Jewish problem might then sink into comparative in-

significance. Recognition and status as well as absorption in recreational pursuits would occupy much less of a place in the life of the members of the community if they were wrapped up in a "cause" which would give them something to live for.

It is the function of religion to supply the motive which will elevate the aims and objectives of the community. Such elevation and enlargement of vision is of the essence of the religious purpose, and this approach to the curriculum of religious education for the U. V. community is the first step in the process.

DISCUSSION

Rabbi Alpert: There was one unfortunate note in Rabbi Markowitz's paper which I think needs correction: the assumption that Jews feel themselves to be ostracized, and that Jews seek only the companionship of Jews. Every small group, no matter how or why constituted, in a small town feels itself excluded and ostracized, and feels itself drawn together by the same common ties. I believe the author is wrong in assuming that this is exclusively true of Jews.

Rabbi Brickner: Fifty-five men and sixty women selected out of a much larger group, and not living as separate unit, cannot be regarded as a community. Therefore no matter how interesting or thorough the study of their activities and attitudes may be, the findings of such a study may not, sociologically speaking, be considered as typical even of the group of which they form a part. I do not think it would be sound to deduce a philosophy of Jewish education or even a methodology from such a very limited study. A curriculum of Jewish education must grow out of an experience with a constant testing of results, and not be based on inference.

Rabbi Rosenzweig: To get a fair analysis, should not this study be applied to a number of cities throughout the United States?

Rabbi Fram: The fact that the Jewish residents of the city under observation are found to be preoccupied mainly

with recreation and social life would have meaning only if this preoccupation distinguished the Jewish residents from the general citizenry. The fact is, however, that the entire middle class group of the American city is characterized by this preoccupation with recreation—bridge, baseball, parties, clubs. The Jews of the small American city belong to that class and so normally share its characteristics. Therefore to say that this concentration of interest in sports and social life is a distinguishing characteristic of the Jews of the city is misleading.

Rabbi Markowitz: It is true that every minority has its adjustment problems. Whether we have any in common with other groups is a question which only a comparative investigation could reveal. Some or even all of our problems are not necessarily peculiar to us as a group. These findings should, of course, be verified by similar studies in other cities.